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AN APPEAL FOR  
NEGRO BISHOPS  
BUT NO SEPARATION  
W. E. B. DUBOIS



(Bonen)  
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# An Appeal for Negro Bishops, But No Separation

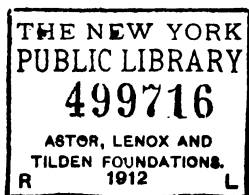
BY

**J. W. E. BOWEN, Ph.D., D.D.**

Professor of Historical Theology and Biblical Literature,  
Gammon Theological Seminary



**NEW YORK: EATON & MAINS**  
**CINCINNATI: JENNINGS & GRAHAM**



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ROY W. BOWEN  
J. W. E. BOWEN  
V. 1. 1. 1.

To

MY WIFE AND CHILDREN, WHO HAVE BEEN MY  
CONSTANT SOURCE OF JOY AND INSPIRATION  
IN ALL MY WORK FOR THE UPLIFT OF THE  
RACE, AND WHO DESIRE FOR THEMSELVES AND  
THE RACE THE LARGEST POSSIBILITIES IN  
CHURCH AND STATE, THAT THEY MAY  
SHARE WITH ALL OF GOD'S CHILDREN THE  
RICH FRUITAGE AND THE FULL TITLE TO ALL  
THAT BELONGS TO MAN WITHOUT REGARD TO  
COLOR, THIS LITTLE VOLUME IS AFFEC-  
TIONATELY DEDICATED BY THE AUTHOR



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## **PUBLISHERS' NOTE**

**THIS** little book of Dr. Bowen we publish on the same basis as that which decided our publication of the book by Dr. Shaw entitled "Should the Negroes of the Methodist Episcopal Church be Set Apart in a Church by Themselves?" These authors respectively represent views of an opposing character, but each forcibly presents his side of the question, and both have a right to be heard.

**EATON & MAINS.**



## FOREWORD

THE appeal of the Negro to the Methodist Episcopal Church is purely an impersonal one. It is not an ambitious contention for honor of office. Our plea for recognition and for opportunity for service is another phase of that constant struggle from which we are never free, looking toward the fixing of a status of the Negro among men. There is a vast difference between the cry of children and the pleading of men. One may be a fret-tish whine, the other a petition of men who are conscious of their strength and realize their potentiality for service. Our emancipation is only begun. We have more than justified the expectations of Lincoln. The step proposed by the author in this book is not a long one. It is a conservative step compared with the advancement given the Negro under the guidance of the great emancipator. But

the step for which we now plead is but another in our racial development. We have reduced our illiteracy to almost one third. We have accumulated property amounting to hundreds of millions of dollars. We have constructed a family and Church life. Our contention at this time is simply a part of the scheme for the larger emancipation of a people, and it is related not merely to a segment of the Negro race that is within the Church, but it concerns the entire ten millions of the race in this country and other multiplied millions on their native soil.

If office *per se* were the desire on the part of those who agitate recognition, offices could be secured by pulling the entire Negro membership out from the Methodist Episcopal Church. In that case we would have an organization all our own. Those who have desired us to go have intimated, even promised, that the Church would subsidize the new organization, help to sustain its schools, and grant us our *pro rata* of the Book Concern capital. With this proposition before us it seems

clear that if the contention of our colored membership were based upon a selfish desire for office, they would pursue a different course than they are now pursuing. Reckoning on a basis of other Negro denominations in a separate organization, we would have five to seven bishops, with a full corps of general officers, to say nothing of positions in the schools that would necessarily and logically follow in the separation.

It is not office for office' sake that is the motive for our contention. We would have an adjustment which will make more efficient our present relation to the Church. Our contact with the Church we would preserve; but we would have recognition, among other reasons, as a substantial reply to the propaganda waged by our opposers, and as a testimonial to our advancement during the past fifty years. Our history of freedom may be disappointing to some, nevertheless we are bold to say that our record is not one of complete failure. Bishop E. E. Hoss, of the Methodist Episcopal Church,

South, knowing thoroughly the life of the Negro churches in the South, testified voluntarily that the Negro membership in the Methodist Episcopal Church is the best Negro membership in the South.

The author by training, large opportunities for observation, intense loyalty to the Church and its ideals, contact with the heart-life and yearnings of his own people, many years of service as a pastor, teacher, and advocate for his people, is qualified to speak. Dr. Bowen has the confidence of his people. He is entitled to the confidence and the consideration of the entire Church. In his presentation of the plea against separation he voices the conviction of more than ninety per cent of the Negro membership of the Church. As a matter of record, the Negro Conferences of the Church have unanimously voted against separation with one exception, and in that case the vote stood 145 to 3 against separation. The author, therefore, speaks with authority.

We bespeak for this book by the Rev. J. W. E. Bowen, of Gammon Theologi-

cal Seminary, the careful consideration which it deserves, both for the manner of treatment as well as for the vital question which it considers.

**ROBERT E. JONES.**

**New Orleans, La., March 11, 1912.**





## **AN APPEAL FOR NEGRO BISHOPS, BUT NO SEPARATION**

**DRIVEN** by a profound and resistless conviction that our Church is exposed to the possibility of committing what many of us would regard as a mistake in legislation for the real uplift of the colored people, I must record my convictions on the subject.

Having given thirty-three years of earnest work among the colored people of the South, and made a close study of the varied questions which relate to their ecclesiastical, moral, and spiritual interests, I feel myself qualified to speak on their behalf.

The modern ecclesiastical "Banquo's Ghost"—the Negro Bishopric—has burst the vault of his supposedly rock-ribbed tomb and is stalking over the land, wringing his hands in an appealing attitude for something. Ah! "some one has blundered," for the Church congratulated her-

self upon a triumphant victory when the so-called "Toy Bishop," "Jim Crow Bishop," or "Kitchen Bishop" was laid to rest under an avalanche of ballots. We then went to sleep hugging the delusion that "All is well."

But, *mirabile dictu*, our sleep is disturbed; the ghost will not down. We are awakening to the well-known truth that nothing is settled until it is settled right. Some questions may be settled with a categorical "Yes" or "No," or with a meaningless wave of the hand. But there are questions and problems that elude this monosyllabic or puerile solution of the child or the unthinking; they require the application of historical knowledge.

Some years ago our Negro membership, out of deference to the social predilection of our white brethren, and to quiet their fears and give assurances that the purpose of their delegates was the advancement of the kingdom among them and not social encroachment, consented to accept a modified episcopacy, held in check hand and foot by constitutional limitations.

**This was not their original contention; they asked for a full bishop with all the rights that inhere in the office. They emphasized the fact that they wanted him for colored Conferences. They never once dreamed that these rights carried with them certain social privileges, or that any one judiciously selected by the Church and known for probity, wisdom, and practical good sense, would lose his good sense when thus elected, and proceed to disturb the peace of the Church by demanding imagined privileges that do not inhere in the office of a bishop. Nevertheless, some good friends of the race were apprehensive of dire consequences to the Church were colored men elected untrammelled to the general episcopacy.**

**These fears find their parallel in the historical and hysterical fears of the South some years ago that invariably possessed her leaders whenever the Negro asked for political or even civic opportunity and rights. They misconceived the reasonable request for participation in the preroga-**

tives of citizenship to mean, "Negro domination." Years farther back, when a large-souled white man asked the South for freedom, fair play, and political equality for the black man, he was startled to hear the characteristic argument which was regarded by the South as the end of all discussion, namely, "Do you want your daughter to marry a N——?" This was called argument; but it is as devoid of sense or logic as the mind of a child is devoid of the power to understand Kant's Categorical Imperative.

When the Negro race consented at the General Conference of Los Angeles to accept a constitutionally limited episcopacy, it was thinking not about social privileges or even episcopal authority. It thought of the great outlying mass of Methodism's Ethiopic children who needed the touch and inspiration of the life of the Church. But some of our white friends used ridicule and sarcasm, the most powerful weapons to defeat that innocent measure. The race has been so tabooed, lampooned, and lacerated by

the merciless shafts of ridicule and sarcasm that the majority of the voters wilted before this method of attack and refused to vote for the measure.

It may be claimed that hitherto our colored membership were following a Jack-o'-lantern phantom that must inevitably lead them into the slough of defeat, disappointment, and dissatisfaction. Pity, 'tis true, that some of their best white friends thus encouraged and led them, but greater is the pity that a wiser head did not show them the true way.

But we now hear a voice of one crying in the wilderness, and its diapason note is clear and steady; it has in it the timbre of a vibrant French chord. It lacks the deceptive bewitchery of a siren which enchants and thrills but lulls its victims to the fatal sleep. It is the voice of a militant general superintendent, who loves without pretense, and whose courage to speak his conviction is cut from the same cloth that sent him to the front in the defense of the Union. He says,

"It is generally conceded that under the present arrangement the colored Conferences do not receive adequate supervision." Then, again, "Although reënforced by increasingly able, diligent, and conscientious district superintendents, they [the white bishops] have little time left for the colored Conferences beyond that required for the annual sessions and official correspondence." Then, again, the bishop lets his plummet down into the depths of a hidden truth, a truth not often spoken aloud, when he says: "But race prejudice—stronger now than ever—would hedge up their way, had white bishops all their time for colored Conferences. Of course they could do much more than as now arranged; but the fact that they are white would make it impossible for them to have that social intimacy with the blacks without which their best intentions and plans would be practically inoperative." Speaking of the work that colored bishops could do, he says: "No race or caste prejudice would hinder their labors. Devoting themselves

wholly, they would give an unheard-of impetus to our membership, in numbers, resources, self-support, and moral and civil worth. Thus wisdom would be justified of her children." Then, finally, he says, "We are strongly convinced that domestic tranquillity, national welfare, and Protestant supremacy will be subserved by retaining and fostering our colored membership; and yet not to give them a black bishop looks like opening the door and bowing them out." Would it be thought a thing incredible when I say that these words of Bishop David H. Moore were reëchoed in the heart of every intelligent and self-respecting Negro in the Methodist Episcopal Church? Yea, verily, Bishop Moore's words have quickened thought and touched the sleeping chords of the race's heart.

There have arisen in some quarters of the Church two suggestions the practical application of which does not meet with the approval of the colored membership of the Church, and insistence upon the same in the face of their lack of approval



and their positive opposition, not loudly expressed, will make them feel that our great Church cares nothing for the voice of this class of her membership, and that the ethical teachings of her great Head have no significance when dealing with them. The second suggestion is based upon a misconception of the facts in the case and does this race an injustice which we are sure will be repudiated by the originators when the facts are fully stated. What are the suggestions?

First. It has been said that Negroes do not want race leadership, that they have given up all hopes of the episcopacy, and, consequently, prefer to have white men as their bishops. Truly they have had enough to destroy not only their hopes but their faith as well; but they have not surrendered either of these virtues. Such speakers and writers are not conversant with three of the mightiest mental equipments of this strange creature, who is even yet as undeciphered: *cheerfulness* under burdens, *persistence* in defeat, *hope* in the presence of insur-

mountable difficulties. *The Negro never gives up hope, and he never commits suicide.* His history under American slavery is a living commentary upon this fact. But never was a statement wider of the mark than the one above. If, however, this statement were true, or is now in accord with the facts, its very truthfulness would be the ground for giving them colored bishops.

This charge reminds one of the old antebellum and postbellum argument (?) of justification for slavery which claimed that the slave was content and happy in his slavery. Heaven save the mark! This supposed encomium of American slavery is its greatest damnation, for any system that destroys the love of liberty in the human breast, and so degrades a man or emasculates the divinity within him as to make him happy and contented in being treated like dumb, driven cattle is the essence of the vilest and most iniquitous concoction of a disordered brain. For that very reason, if for no other, that of crushing the divine

personality in man, thou wicked system, thou deservest death, and, thank God, death overtook and throttled thee.

Now, therefore, if it were true that our Negro membership will be content with a white leadership and discontented with Negro leadership, that argument proves conclusively that the system that is responsible for this condition is destructive of the very objects sought.

Further, such a claim presumes that these years of growth on the part of this race have failed to develop that essential element that makes a race, namely, the consciousness of a racial personality. In such a case we must conclude that the teachers of the race are incompetent and unworthy, the educational method false, and the pupil not worth his salt. But where is the half-wit who would risk his half-wit with such a contention? To assume, in this day of light and grace, that the Negro does not know his wants or needs is an assumption that is devoid of intelligence, and the assumer deserves the pity of clear-thoughted men.

But, secondly, there is a sincere desire on the part of many noble minds to do something to help the colored people to advance on the principle of equality of opportunity in Church and State. They see and feel the burden of the problem. Some are shackled by the bonds of social predilection, and in some degree with a harrowing fear of social attack and, possibly, social contamination by this simple sable Hamite, who may yet have the aroma of his ancient verdant forest about him. In downright sincerity, however, some of our best friends propose, as a settlement of one of our stubborn problems—the natural desire on the part of the Negro for racial episcopacy—that the Church elect two white bishops for this work and settle them in residences in the South among this people as their leaders. The sincere desire of these men and their evident purpose to do something to meet the crying need of our work in the South challenge our respect for the promoters and a critical inquiry into their plans.

The plan is pleasing to a few doubtless, *but it will not work satisfactorily*. My reasons for holding that the plan is not workable and, consequently, will prove unsatisfactory, are as follows:

First. It has never worked satisfactorily. Forty years ago this plan was begun by the Church, but its failure is patent to the close student of facts. It was attempted with some of the greatest bishops of the Church; the most of these have gone to their reward. Who will dare hold that there was a lack of interest, sympathy, and strenuous labor in such bishops as the never-to-be-forgotten Gilbert Haven, for whom more Negro parents named their children than for any other white man except the great emancipator; the rugged and beloved Willard F. Mallalieu, whose work for the Negro in the New Orleans University abides to this day; the sweet-singing chaplain-bishop, Charles C. McCabe; the scholarly Goodsell, bigger in heart than in body; the exact FitzGerald; the flaming evangel, Isaac W. Joyce; the astute

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parliamentarian, Neely; and the eloquent, great brother, our present senior Bishop Warren, the finder of the founder of Gammon Theological Seminary? Not a word of criticism can be lodged against these great brother bishops, whom our people loved with their peculiar and exclusive African fervor.

The fact that larger results were not obtained was not due to the men but to the system and to the conditions existing at the time. The bishops wrought a mighty work for God among this people, but could not do for the Negroes in the South what Bishop Foster did for our Methodism in Boston, or Bishop Foss in Philadelphia, or Bishop Andrews in New York, or what Bishop McDowell is now doing in Chicago, or Bishop Berry in Buffalo, or Bishop Nuelsen in Omaha, or Bishop Warren in Denver. See what that wise statesman, Bishop William F. Anderson, has done and is doing for our white work in the South. The writer has often coveted him for the Negroes. He has quickened every part of his do-

main. He knows his preachers by name and by heart, and they know him even so likewise. Why did our bishops leave our Southern field so soon? One answer is, They were needed in other parts of the Church. But why conceal part of the truth in this connection? Again, when did a bishop of the Church make a bona fide residence and home among the Negroes to whom he was officially sent and from which went forth the life and thought and influence of our Church among this humble folk? By asking such questions, we simply ask the Church to grant us what the South refuses, namely, the right of free, dignified, and respectful expression of free speech. In other words, we ask, in the simple but earnest language of the Puritan maid, that we may speak for ourselves.

But it should be asked also, Could any of our bishops have opened his home as freely to the Negro members, as possibly his heart moved him to do, as was done for our membership in Baltimore or San Francisco? Once upon a time

we were children, and full reasons could have been given for certain courses of action. The Church spake to us as children, but now, since we have become men and have "put away childish things," she also must "put away childish" answers and give us full reasons as it becometh men. We know that we were not prepared for a different treatment forty years ago, but we know that we are prepared for it to-day. The truth is we have outgrown our baby clothes, but our great, good, and loving mother—God bless her! and may not a hair of her good gray head be touched—insists that we are still children and persists in treating her overgrown children as though they were still babes in her lap to be crooned over.

Come now and let us reason this matter out. Could these bishops have done otherwise under the circumstances? To ask the question is to give the answer. Further, no white bishop can share even in this day the courtesies and hospitalities of a Negro's home without exposing



himself to the castigation of vile and biting criticism on the part of certain of the elect on the one hand, and making it hard for the kindhearted Negro family among the Southern whites on the other hand when he returns home in the North, and they very properly do not so expose themselves. There is no distaste on the part of the bishops, but conditions exist that they cannot override. The simple truth is, as the school boy puts it, "facts is facts." Should we therefore as a Church continue this farce of a system that works inconvenience to the one party and deprivation and dissatisfaction to the other, and finally is a failure in bringing about the proper results?

Are our colored members to be shaved down and pressed in by a system that lacks flexibility and that is a failure, while even the Chinese and the Scandinavian and the German Christians at home and abroad, and our Spanish Christians in Buenos Ayres and Chile, must have an up-to-date system that satisfies them and brings results? Shall we be

guilty of a palpable discrimination between the children of the household, giving heed to the voice and needs of one set and deliberately closing our ears to the reasonable requests of the other?

### **NEW FACTORS AMONG A NEW PEOPLE**

In the next place, this proposed plan, if it may be so dignified, will not work because it is obsolete and antiquated. Since it failed forty years ago, the intervening years, with the constantly shifting social customs and needs, have not washed away its stains of failure and made it fit to be revived or continued. Our Methodism glories in her power to adjust to the needs of the day, to improve her machinery, in order to keep herself constantly in the van of the marching hosts as "Christianity in earnest." As the system of education must constantly change to meet the needs of a new civilization, so the Church should change and not adhere to a policy or method of administration for one people while she is awake to the necessity of meeting kin-

dred new demands in other parts of her field for another people.

Further, the proposed plan, vague in the minds of men, will fail because it does not take note of the vast changes that have taken place among the Negroes during the last four decades. A new race has come upon the stage of action. The public schools and the colleges and universities of the Christian churches of the North and South that are at work in the South among the Negro people, and the large contribution of cultivated men and women of the race made by the Northern colleges, have wrought a transformation in the Negro race that staggers the faith of even the elect. These forces have given us a new generation to deal with.

Take a simple statistical statement. In 1880 only thirty per cent of the race could read and write, while seventy per cent were rated as illiterate, whereas in 1910, or thirty years after, the tables have made a complete somersault, and the figures now stand seventy per cent

can read and write, while only thirty per cent represents the illiterates.

Gratifying and astounding as these figures are, they do not state the whole truth, for truth cannot be limited to the statistical table of addition, and moral power eludes the gross scales of avoirdupois. The moral power in this transformation and the real educated Negro, the scholar in letters, the professional man in the sciences and the man of genuine cultivation, together with the specialist, are thrown into this common group and the nation rarely sees them. Therefore, the above figures speak more by omission than by admission or addition.

To those of the thoughtful Negroes who know the facts it can be established by proofs in flesh and blood that there are among the race a sufficient number of thoroughly and broadly educated men and women in mathematics, history, languages—ancient and modern, and even English—the sciences, philosophy, literature, economics, and every depart-

ment of a theological school to fill the leading colleges and universities and seminaries now operating among the race in the South. More than this, there are scores of young men and women of the race who would gladly sacrifice their all to perfect themselves more thoroughly as specialists for a university professorship if they were assured that such a professorship stands ready to receive them when they have made the special preparation.

Instance the case of Professor Lorenzo H. King, A.B., B.D., a graduate of Gammon Theological Seminary, now a professor in Clark University. I learn that the Board of Trustees elected him to the chair of English in that institution, but required that he take advance and special work in Columbia University before he entered upon his duties. Without conferring with flesh and blood, he surrendered his belongings, took his wife and his three babies, and put a thousand miles between his native heath and that mighty seat of learning in New York. He sacrificed his life insurance; he worked as an

elevator boy in New York; he swept offices; he and family ate bread and syrup many times, and often his whole family were ill and had insufficient fuel to keep them comfortable, as well as insufficient food. Still he plodded on through poverty, sickness, and hunger, and he completed his course in Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary with credit that he might fill honorably the chair of English to which he had been elected. And there are others who have done likewise, and still others who would undergo the like privations and hardships and would count it all joy to give up every earthly pleasure and treasure to equip themselves that they may fill chairs in the schools of their own race.

A new Negro is born. He is instinct with an imperial and imperious conviction of racial personality. He believes that he is born for some purpose, and he wants to achieve it in the world of letters, of commerce, of trade, of politics, and the world of moral and spiritual forces. He craves full suffrage in the republic of

thought and ethics and politics. But he preserves a hopeful spirit even in the face of the cruel, prejudicial, and offensive legislation of States against him. He breathes into the nostrils of his children, not the bloody vow that Hamilcar breathed into the nostrils of his mighty son, when he made him swear to wreak vengeance upon the proud Italian across the seas, but the thrilling, soul-inspiring, and stirring sentence of Terence, the African poet, that links him to the full destinies of man, this classic truth: "*Homo sum, et humani a me nil alienum puto*"—"I am a man, and nothing that relates to man can be a matter of unconcern to me." Let the doubting man make a test and be convinced. The writer, who has passed the vituline or sophomoric period of thought, says to such doubters, as Galileo said to his doubters, "Look through my telescope." Study almost any one of the congregations of this people and you will find that fully eighty per cent of them were born since the famous Emancipation Proclamation un-

riveted the shackles from the manly limbs of Ethiopia's blameless race. If it be possible, put your finger upon the pulse of that anxious race and count the beatings of that longing heart. Read, if you can, the mysteries of his soul through his soft black eye. This effort will be rewarded with a knowledge of this race confirmatory of every contention of the writer, and startling for its breadth and depth to the unbeliever. Let us, then, ask the question, Will the Church attempt to put this new, sparkling, gurgling, and fermenting product of the modern vintage into the old, riven, shrunken, and obsolete leathern bag of forty years ago?

There may be a thousand ways to tinker at a problem, but only one true way to solve it. Honest men are searching for that way. The path to solution is as clear as a sunbeam to the unblurred eyes of the man who accepts the Golden Rule and the Sermon on the Mount as his rule of life and the standard by which he is to deal with others.



### THE ELECTION OF BISHOPS BURT AND NUELSEN

As an evidence of the larger spirit of our Methodism and of her ability and readiness to meet a condition and cope with a difficult situation, note the ease and swiftness with which she met a need in our European work and our German work. No glamour of rhetoric or juggling of words can conceal the truth or weaken the logic of the facts in the election of Bishops Burt and Nuelsen. In the case of Bishop Burt, his long and rare experience in Europe as the superintendent of our work there convinced the Church that he was especially adapted to lead on the entire European forces. The Methodist people of Europe contended that the old system of yearly changes in episcopal visitation was not conducive to stability and to the spread of our Methodism on the Continent, and they so stated in clear and forceful language, and the Church heard their plea and elected Bishop Burt. What are the results of the work of this European Asbury? Our

Methodism is spreading from the seven-hilled city westward toward the pillars of Hercules, thence eastward toward the ancient steppes of Russia, and has crossed the Mediterranean into the ancient land of the Negro's ancestors.

In the case of Bishop Nuelsen, he was elected with the ruling idea that he is needed for our German work. The fact that he was a cultivated German contributed to his election. Because of his other qualifications, his race and language became additional qualifications and were partly determinative in his election. The Church soon discovered that she had elected a rare spirit with an acuteness of mind that characterized his mighty Saxon ancestors. German delegates, at home and from abroad, reënforced by a large majority of English-speaking delegates, argued, pleaded, and worked for his election because they believed that a cultivated German could advance the work among Germans better than an English-speaking bishop could possibly do. The Church heard and

answered the call, and the faith and prophecy of the Germans have reaped a larger fruitage than can be crowded into the multiplication table through the labors of Bishop Nuelsen. Even so likewise should the Church hear and answer the pleading call of her sable children and give them bishops of their own blood, bishops who can speak, not only the vernacular of their lips, but the language of their hearts also.

#### CHANGES IN MACHINERY ARE NECESSARY FOR INCREASED EFFICIENCY

A pertinent question arises at this juncture, namely, Should we change our episcopal methods among the colored Conferences? A cry for a change, unbased in the logic of facts or in the need of the work, would be revolutionary and should be stoutly resisted; but an intelligent demand for a change, based upon changed conditions, the needs of the work, and to keep pace with our almost kaleidesopic, whirling civilization, should be heeded by our lawmakers and Godfearing men.

**Our machinery is not inspired or handed down by revelation. Our principles are biblical, but each generation must realize them by its own method. Only truth abides. As the old bard sang,**

**"All things earthly pass away,  
Nought but truth can e'er remain."**

**To cling to a system with no regard as to whether we are getting adequate results makes that system of machinery an ecclesiastical fetich, and as such it deserves no more consideration than an idol of the den.**

**We have changed and do change our machinery at every General Conference, in order that we may meet the increasing demand for greater efficiency in our working plans and advance the kingdom more rapidly. But should we change for our colored brethren? What has color to do with principle or manhood or the kingdom of God? Nevertheless, a stubborn fact is before us, and we cannot escape the question of "color." It is not the Negro's question; it is the white man's question and the Negro's burden.**

On the basis of expediency, we have recognized the "color line." We raise no quarrel at this time with fact or expediency. Hitherto the poor, unthinking Negro could not appreciate the difference between "expediency" and "principle," but the church literally belabored him with loving assiduity to have him see that her purposes were right and to believe that ultimately he would be crowned with her most loving favor and gifts. The truth dawned upon him slowly when finally he gave his heart's unalloyed devotion and simple faith to his great church. The intelligent Negro has accepted the situation, not with Jesuitical reservation, or as a finality, but in all sincerity of faith as the best possible mode of action and life for the present, and he has gone about his business to bring in the better day, "when we all come in the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Now then, having accepted the teachings taught us

by our teachers, we simply insist that these teachings be put into practice, in order that the prayer of the apostolic dialectician may become a reality in the Church of Christ and in human society. Why not, therefore, change for the colored brethren as well as for our Chinese brethren in Shanghai, or for our Italian brethren in Rome, or for our people in California or Tennessee?

The writer believes that our insufficient and limited episcopal supervision—insufficient and limited in the intensive and extensive application of the vast power of our episcopacy to the moral and social problems in the South among our colored people—cannot but be observed more and more by the careful student as not in keeping with the resources of our great church and, consequently, as giving less and less satisfaction each year. The observer will admit that the social changes in society in general and also among the colored people themselves, as well as our antiquated methods, lie at the root of this inadequacy, and perforce

this very situation creates an argument, proof positive, for our contention for a change in method that cannot and should not be set aside with any degree of complacency that we are doing the work of God among this people.

In addition to the ethical and biblical argument for a change of policy—and it may be said at this juncture that the writer believes he has counted the secret pulsations of the Negro's heart and sounded the bottomest of his bottom soul in this discussion—the social results of the work of this race are practical and oracular demonstrations of the possibility of developing him into a positive force for the kingdom and should be taken advantage of to bring about this result. These facts are of arithmetic; they are concrete; they are not abstract.

The achievements of our colored membership form a concrete basis in their ethical request for bishops of racial identity. Take a single illustration. The Washington Annual Conference stands as a conspicuous illustration of the ac-

## BUT NO SEPARATION . 43

complishments and possibilities of the work among this people. For the current quadrennium, now closing, this Conference has contributed toward the educational, moral, and spiritual uplift among the people within its bounds and to the kingdom of Christ among other peoples the following amounts:

|   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| 1. Salaries of pastors, district superintendents, bishops and the claims of Conference Claimants..... | \$400,521       |
| 2. For building new churches and parsonages .....   | 146,933         |
| 3. Paid on old indebtedness.....  | 111,186         |
| 4. Current expenses, churches and Sunday schools.....   | 105,854         |
| 5. Disciplinary benevolences.....   | 43,882          |
| 6. Other benevolences and local enterprises .....   | 14,035          |
| Grand total.....  | <hr/> \$822,411 |

These figures, to say the least, should be gratifying to the Church. There is no occasion for boasting, but they furnish proof of still larger possibilities. To think of a race, so recently liberated, with an inequality in civic, political, indus-



trial, and commercial opportunity, within the space of forty years being able to place upon the altar of God in four years more than three quarters of a million dollars in one Conference alone reads with a heart-thrill of hope and prophecy unrivaled by the fascinating tales of Aladdin's lamp. Bear in mind that these figures were not piled up from the high wages of skilled artisans to any great extent, nor were they garnered from factory, railroad, and other manufacturing interests; nor do they represent the accumulated interest of bank and other stock investments, or large incomes from property rents, but they represent the sweat of their brow and the labor of their muscle. If, now, you add the property valuation of the Conference to these figures, you have, for churches, \$1,290,044; parsonages, \$162,186, making a total property valuation of \$1,452,230, which, added to their contribution for the Lord's work of \$822,411, makes a working capital that passed through the hands of this one Conference alone of \$2,274,641. We

offer these figures, not for contrast or comparison, but as illustrative and for encouragement.

The writer is making a thorough study of the work in all the colored Conferences for the past eight years. Thus far the figures bring out a magnificent result that gives just cause for thankfulness on the one hand and a depressing and humiliating suggestion on the other hand, that our ethical and dynamic power are not equal to our opportunities. For in point of membership, Sunday school scholars, and in the social and civic power and recognition that should be accorded to us, we are compelled to take second place to certain other religious bodies. Admitting our deficiencies, what might we have done had we had the close, continuous, and personal residence and direction of our chief pastors?

#### **MAKING BRICKS WITHOUT STRAW**

We are the only Methodist Episcopalians in the world who are asked to keep step with the mighty movement of

Methodism without the unbroken, personal guidance of the episcopacy. The Negroes of the colored Methodisms have the daily oversight of twenty-five bishops; our Methodists, North and South, exclusive of the colored people in our Church, in Canada, Europe, Asia, South America, and the isles of the sea have living among them, a host of the noblest spirits in the episcopacy of our Church and of other Episcopal Methodisms. We see a bishop once a year at a Conference for four or six days.

Since Boston and Chicago, with their highly enlightened laity, with their great universities and other agencies for aggressive work, with a ministry, cultured, strong, and aggressive and equal to the demands of a complex civilization, need the touch and constant personal supervision of a bishop, whose home is their home and whose service is felt in every nook and corner of these respective parishes in all that concerns the wide purposes of Methodism, what shall we say of the burning need of the Negro race in

Texas and Arkansas, in Florida and in Alabama, who are not so fortunate as their brethren in the North, but who long for the very power that energizes their favored brethren in the North?

These stubborn facts, devoid of sentiment, appeal to the cold and unprejudiced thinking of thoughtful men and women. With a conscience free from the taint of evil-thinking and with a knowledge illuminated by the lamp of experience and observation, the writer affirms his conviction, the product of sober study and long heart-contact with the people involved, to be that our system is not reaching the mass of our people and that the results are not commensurate with the expenditure of power, and therefore this system is valueless as a dynamic force in the secret life of the race, and we pray the Church not to require this race to go through another quadrennium hampered as we are and denied a larger and more direct episcopal supervision.

As an illustration of a change of policy necessitated by changed conditions, and

one that worked out greater results than the old plan could possibly have done, take the case of the faculties in our institutions of learning. Years ago it was possible and absolutely necessary to have all the faculties in all the denominational schools in the South among the colored people composed of white teachers only. There were no colored persons capable of teaching in these schools. But the years have brought a vast host of thoroughly competent and cultivated colored teachers to the front. The different churches recognize this fact and have made corresponding changes. These formerly exclusive white faculties have gladly given way to mixed ones, of white and colored teachers. Our Church led the van in this change. It is now safe to say that all churches recognize that these schools cannot now be conducted successfully without having mixed faculties. It must be said also, upon the testimony of facts, as well as upon the testimony of the scholastic records of these colored teachers, that they are equal to their

work and not at all inferior to the best of the whites. We believe that this policy of having the best of the whites coöperate with the best of the blacks for the elevation of this race to its place of self-direction is a wise one and should not be discontinued.

Having uttered this truth as to the literary equipment of the colored teacher, the other truth, equally as valuable and as clearly apprehended in this discussion, must not be overlooked, namely, literary and scientific furnishings are not the exclusive requirements for the teacher or leader of a people, and they do not of themselves make one a fit leader. We are fully aware that, while culture of books is a *sine qua non* for leadership, it is not the *ne plus ultra* for the man of God who essays to lead a people unto the high realms of thought and life. This fact being patent to thinkers, it is not within the eye of history as yet when the best in the white race should be withdrawn from active participation in the work of helping this needy race. At this juncture

truth must take precedence over sentiment and fact above fancy.

There is no sentiment about this change. It was based at first upon expediency; but this gave way to the firmer foundation of justice and sound psychological and pedagogical principles, for it is an undisputed truth, known to all workers in the realm of mind, that the closed gates of the mind of any race, like the ancient mythological gates of the "Forty Thieves," open only to the "Open Sesame" when spoken by the lips of one of its kind. The thinkers of the race are amazed at the claims of certain persons who assert that they know the Negro better than he knows himself. These self-constituted wiseacres are still in the bonds of that ante-bellum stupidity that gloated in the presumption of an esoteric knowledge of the race which had been concealed from the race itself but which had been revealed unto them. The arrogance and nonchalance of such a claim are surpassed only by their flippancy and ignorance.

A race cannot be finally lifted from the outside or by the mere communication of knowledge. This method is only a helping and kindergarten method. The true and permanent lifting must be done from the inside, and that by inspiration. This can be done only by one of its kind, trained, cultivated, consecrated, sympathetic, and devoted unselfishly to the larger good of the race; one who, like Moses, prays to be blotted out rather than that his unfortunate and even ignorant and rebellious people should be forsaken; one who drinks from the same cup of sorrow that the lowliest of his race drinks from.

Human growth, therefore, must be endogenous. "Man," says Emerson, "is like that noble endogenous plant which grows like the palm, from within outward. His own affair, though impossible to others, he can open with celerity and in sport." This truth is as severe as logic and as uncompromising as mathematics. The only true way, then, to lift the Negro race to the plane of race initia-



tive, race pride, race contribution to the kingdom of God and man, to self-support and to a place of active participation in the duties and privileges of citizenship in the "Parliament of Man," is to search out among them for men "full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom" who are fit for service in the realms of moral, social, educational, and ecclesiastical uplift: *and the race has such men.*

Permit me to file a caveat at this juncture. The writer does not essay to teach the Church her duty in anything; he is endeavoring only to make a contribution to the best thought of the Church, that she may arrive at the wisest solution of this pressing problem. In this endeavor grant him the privilege to speak plainly the truth as God gives him to see it, for while ignorance of the truth may be pitiable and pardonable, indifference to and concealment and suppression of the same is stultification and therefore renders one culpable.

Bishop Foster, the soul of sincerity, whose white-plumed brow was more illus-

trative of courage, faith, and a holy life than the plume of Henry of Navarre, while opposing the election of colored men to the episcopacy on prudential grounds, had the equal frankness of speech and magnanimity of soul to admit that there were colored men fit for the position twenty years ago. He admitted the soundness of the principle in the contention made by the colored men of that day. Let this bishop speak in his own masterful way. Referring to the colored brethren and their pleadings, he says: "Some of these brothers are equal in talent with their white brothers. They are not slow to discover that. It would not be strange if they are prompt to assert it. They do now declare it, and who shall say them nay? Out of this gratifying fact—for it is a gratifying fact—it shows that we have not wrought in vain; that our 'brother in black,' with opportunity, may be equal to his white brothers, and that some of the former will surpass many of the latter. But out of this comes another fact; it is here: these brothers

demand recognition. They ask and claim it with persistence, that they shall not be discriminated against in the high offices of the Church. It is attempted to pacify them with the assurance that when they shall develop men who will be qualified to fill these positions their claim will be recognized and they will be elected to the coveted places. Is this a wise or fair putting of the case? It is implied that want of the qualified man is the only impediment in the way. *Do we not know that this is not true?*" (Italics mine.) Such language is too elevated; who can bear it? More, not a bishop since that day has opposed the election of a colored man to the episcopacy. There is no other way, and the Church may safely and wisely undertake this work for God.

### SOME GOOD RESOLUTIONS

Place before the eye three of the great utterances upon this question and the final action upon the whole and draw the logical conclusion. First, Bishop Foster wrote twenty years ago that there were

colored men capable for the office of bishop. This was written in 1892. Second, the General Conference of 1896 adopted the following resolution from the Committee on Episcopacy:

In the election of bishops there should be no discrimination on account of race or color, but men should be chosen because of their worth and fitness for the position. In the presence of this statement, often reiterated by various bodies of our Church, we believe the time has come when the General Conference may safely and wisely choose a bishop from among our seventeen hundred ministers of African descent.

Third, the General Conference of 1900, at Chicago, went one step farther in the evolution of thought and conviction and purpose upon this question. The Committee on Episcopacy adopted the following report, which was submitted to and adopted by the General Conference with a practically enthusiastic and unanimous vote:

In the election of bishops there should be no discrimination on account of race or color, but men should be chosen because of their worth and fitness for the position. In the presence of this statement, often reiterated by various bodies of our Church, we believe the time has come when

the General Conference may safely and wisely choose a bishop from among our seventeen hundred ministers of African descent, and we recognize the need of such an officer among our people of African descent.

As a plain student of history and of the philosophy of history, we ask, How these beautiful and philosophical deliverances be reconciled with the stubborn facts immediately wrought out after the adoption of the report of the Committee on Episcopacy? That they may be reconciled, we do not deny. We simply confess our intellectual obtuseness and inadequate experience in state matters when we say that we are not equal to the task of harmonizing these things. As a layman in these matters, may we not ask the unsophisticated question, Have we not, as a Church, filled the Book of Resolutions with roseate and rhetorical declarations on the "Colored-Bishop Questions"? Is it not time to write the first chapter in a "Book of Acts"? Shall we go on from General Conference to General Conference amusing the Negro race with thrilling statements of our prin-

ciples and then fail to crystallize those principles in argument of flesh and blood? Brethren of the Methodist Episcopal Church, you who sent more prayers to heaven, more soldiers to the field, and more nurses to the hospitals during the murky days of bloody war, that every black mother might own her child and that the nation might be preserved in unity, one ounce of fact on this question will be worth more to this race and to the kingdom than all the beautiful resolutions that we have published declaring our principles.

#### A PRACTICAL SOLUTION

We come now to a practical and possible solution of the problem. Discussions that do not suggest solutions or point the way out are but dreams and vagaries. In all questions that affect the well-being of the Church, logical possibilities and reasonable methods should be the purpose of a discussion, otherwise such discussions are only intellectual gymnastics.

At the General Conference in Los Angeles a suggestion was made that all the colored Conferences be gathered into General Conference districts by themselves, just as the Germans were put into a district by themselves. The idea of segregating them from the whites was foreign to the movers. It was doubtless for the purpose of amassing them into districts for purposes of increased efficiency in the Church, as we had already Conferences of colored preachers for like purposes. A majority of the colored delegates were frightened into an opposition to the scheme on the ground that it would be "Jim-crowing" them—*uncircumcized word*—to themselves. They were fearful and suspicious of every effort to cut them off from the red blood of the Church. They had come to look upon even an ingenuous argument in which they were concerned, as an ingenious effort against them. Their long and bitter experience in the South has not freed them from the spell of this evil genie. They must not be blamed even though they were in error.

They failed at the time to see the advantage that would accrue to them, the Conferences, and to the Church by being thus concentrated into two districts by themselves. Our German brethren saw these benefits for themselves, and they immediately and quickly welcomed the change. Had the Negroes been looking for larger representation in the boards of the Church, this new plan would have gratified their ambition; but it would have done more than increase their numerical strength on the boards; it would have developed in their enlarged numbers an *esprit de corps* which is a positive asset to any people or organization. If the Germans were willing to be put into a German district for larger work, why should Negroes object to such a plan for themselves, especially when so much more work can be accomplished by this method? They would have accepted the plan had not some one lifted the cry of "Wolf!" or shaken the red rag of "Jim-crowism" before them. But how shall we proceed?

First. Gather all the colored Confer-



ences into two General Conference districts. On the Los Angeles representation, this will give forty-four representatives to each district, which is two more than the Germans now have.

Second. Request the General Conference to elect two bishops of African descent and assign them to residences in the South, one in each of these districts. By assigning them to such residences we do not assign the districts to them. Nor is there the suggestion of a "districted episcopacy" in this plan, though the writer is frank to say that he does not take fright whenever that type of episcopacy is mentioned; efficient leadership is his shibboleth.

Third. Ask the Board of Bishops to continue and enlarge their present method of continuous episcopal supervision, and have these two bishops travel within these districts in the presidency of these colored Conferences, rotating with our white bishops therein. We would not have any plan adopted that would deprive the colored people of the

regular episcopal superintendence of our white bishops. While, from a moral point of view, these colored bishops will not expect to preside over white Conferences, they may be used in divers ways throughout the Church to enrich their experience and that of the Church, and thus do a large work for their race and the Church. This plan does not invalidate the principle of the "general superintendency" of our episcopacy. "General superintendency," as we conceive it, inheres in the episcopacy as a unit and not in the episcopos as an individual. Further, the right to superintend our whole Church is conferred by the General Conference on the episcopacy, but the authority to exercise that right in superintendency is limited by appointment to a single Conference at a time by that same episcopacy, and a repetition of such authority the second or tenth year does no violence to the principle of "general superintendency."

In this connection let it be said that the self-respecting and educated and sen-

sitively constituted Negro regards with strong disapproval the unspoken suggestions and innuendoes that intimate that he wishes to force himself upon any home, body, or people. When unwelcomed or unbidden, his innate good sense and African modesty are his safeguard and guarantee against his overstepping of the proprieties of a well-ordered society. He is "black" in face and "comely" in manners and spirit. Does not refinement, reënforced by the birth of personal consciousness and the knowledge of personal limitations, operate in all men alike? Where has there been one case on record, in Church or State, when a cultivated gentleman in black violated the unwritten conventionalities of a home or gathering? *No! No! Brethren, a gentleman in black is no less a gentleman for being black than is a gentleman in white more of a gentleman for being white.*

This is one of the lessons that the Negro is called and appointed of God to teach the world, and please him, we have set our hand to our seal with African

zeal to teach it if it takes a thousand years of struggle, oppression, humiliation, and defeat, but for certain victory. Like our slave ancestors, we sing in our hearts:

"Keep a' inching along, inching along,  
Jesus will come by-and-by;  
Keep a' inching along, like a poor inch worm,  
Jesus will come by-and-by."

We will not surrender our heritage of opportunity and duty, for,

Right is right, since God is God,  
And right the day must win;  
To doubt would be disloyalty,  
To falter would be sin.

Fourth. Exchange Negro bishops with Negro bishops and also with white bishops in the colored Conferences, and also have a white bishop coöperate with a colored bishop occasionally in his Conference work. This method will keep the entire membership of these Conferences in constant touch with the whole Church. There will be work enough for colored bishops to do. There are Sunday school conventions, church dedications, District Conferences, which are necessary institutions in these parts, and school gather-

ings and opportunities for leadership in the social and civic movements of the day for the improvement of the race conditions in the land. His work will just have begun when the appointments are read. The colored bishops of to-day will be to their race in opportunities and calls for service in social, moral, educational, and spiritual lines what Asbury was to our infant Church. We do not need a new alignment but a new arrangement whereby the Church will come closer to the Negro, and this can be brought about by some such suggestion as is mentioned in this discussion. The question of social contact as used in the narrow and superficial way should not obtrude its head in an elevated suggestion for the advancement of men. Negro bishops can do for the races some things that need to be done in their deeper spiritual nature that cannot be done by any other person. This thought is not reflective in the least, nor is it meant to give honor to anyone. The business of the hour is too serious to be trifled with by giving utterance to

senseless compliments on the one hand and uncharitable criticisms on the other.

WILL THE NEGRO SEPARATE FROM  
THE CHURCH?

As to the question of separation, the agitation is more local than general, and the sources of the same can be located. Every now and then a gratuitous suggestion is adroitly made to the colored people indicating the great good that will come to them if they decide to withdraw from the Church. These suggestions are usually clothed in rainbow language; but the dull and unresponsive Negro has not yet seen the mirage of milk and honey that some of these teachers see. If a plebiscite were taken upon this question among the colored Conferences and among their laity, as to the wisdom of or necessity for separation, we venture the opinion that an overwhelming majority of the uninfluenced voters would register an emphatic opposition against the suggestion or movement. The writer is thoroughly convinced that it would be an unfortu-

nate event for the Negro to withdraw from our Church and that it would also react in a deleterious way against the spirit of brotherhood and amity now spreading so rapidly in all religious communions. Should such a movement eventuate, both of us, the Negro and the Church, would become poorer in spirit and opportunity, from which let us pray God to deliver us.

It is a false, stupid, and unbiblical theology that conceives that any race may live unto itself. Races, like individuals, have a history to write and a duty to perform, and no one can fail to discharge that duty and hope to perpetuate its life. Nor are the achievements of a race its own exclusive possessions. We belong to each other. Further, races come to their highest efficiency and largest life as they touch and are touched by other races and as they pour their life into another people. Consequently, interracial relationship on the basis of brotherhood, is the only true way for enlarging and perpetuating racial existences. The slug-

gish Angles of the British Isles required a transfusion of blood and thought and culture from the inflexible Saxon, and had to come into contact with the culture, literature, and statecraft of the Romans in order to be quickened into that new life that has made them the haughty, conquering race they are to-day.

Sometimes it is said that the colored people need the Methodist Episcopal Church, but the Church does not need them. This is only a half truth, and it is dangerous because it is a half truth. The colored people do need the Methodist Episcopal Church; they need the white people. But they do not need them because they are white. They need them because of what they are, because they are strong, and because they can help the weak. Once upon a time the unlettered Negro thought that the color of the face made the man, and he well-nigh worshiped a white face. Years of contact and growth in knowledge have not reduced his respect for and his honor to the white man, but they have freed him from



his superstitious reverence for "white" as a color. He has come to learn that his white brother is a strong, great-hearted, and justice-loving brother, and he believes that contact with his brother will help him into the larger life of the kingdom. By parity of reasoning the American red man needs the white American, and had the white American been more just and patient and humane and Christlike in his early dealings with this red man, it would have been better for both to-day. Bancroft is not far wrong when he says of those early Puritans that "they fell upon their knees and then upon the aborigines." The Hindus, likewise, and the swarthy Egyptians need the civilizing touch of the English, and this not because the English are white, but because the English people are strong. These darker peoples would need any other people that are stronger than they. It is no disgrace to be weak, but it would detract from the glory of the strong to withhold that which would bless and help the weak and at the same time enrich them for giving. Yea,

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verily, we need the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Church is not poorer by our presence therein.

Further, we will not become *particeps criminis* with any set of men, white or black, in an attempt to force our Church to reverse herself, falsify her history, and retreat from her high position so often taken with regard to Christian brotherhood and surrender her sincere purpose, so often reiterated, to deal justly by her "Brother in Black." Such an initiative must be taken, if taken at all, by the Church, either in some official way or by some palpable act that can be construed to mean that she is ready for going out of the fold, or by some confession that she finds that she is weary of her Herculean task of lifting an ex-slave race into its heritage among the family of races; or that she is mistaken in her purposes, and after a fair trial, she finds that it is impossible to carry out her high principles touching the Negro. We are open to conviction, and in the final analysis an argument must be made

by some of the most trusted servants, free from the taint and tint of double-dealing, and one that convinces us that it is pitched upon the high level of the welfare of Christ's kingdom showing that the greatest good will come to both parties by a mutual agreement to separate, as Abraham and Lot separated. But, open as we are to conviction upon this matter, we are also convinced that the Church cannot commit suicide, and until so convinced, "as for me [the colored people] and my house, we will serve the Lord" where we are.

Further, we will not consent to an inferiority of human and divine endowment by a tacit confession of the uselessness of the struggle for equality of opportunity in the Church, which confession would be the logical deduction from a piqued and voluntary withdrawal, without an argument that "would satisfy the law of the sufficient reason," and satisfy in a larger sense the higher law, the law of God as understood in the intelligent consensus of fair-minded men.

The possibility of a rupture and break up lies in the root of human nature as evidenced in the oracular and historical demonstrations in every Church at several crucial points of history. These ruptures and segregations occurred when the withdrawing party or parties became convinced that legislation or practice in the Church was inimical to their social or religious well-being or retarded the growth of principles dear to them; or when they became convinced that the majority were inconsiderate of their rights and views, and when they discovered the futility of the struggle for fair play and the acceptance of their tenets of Church polity; or when they became convinced that the kingdom of Christ could be advanced more by separation than by a unitary organization, then conscience awoke and whipped them into line and ordered them to march, and they marched in obedience to what they regarded as the voice of God. They could not have done otherwise and be true men.

What is the case with the white and

colored people in our Church? We are aware that there are to be found among us some who would feel better and more comfortable in a Church composed of white people only, while others would count it all joy in the service of God if they could look around, once in a while, and see only the face of Ham's children. These two classes would reduce the Church of God to a social or ethical club whose membership would be settled by vote upon the tint of the face, the kink of the hair, or the beak of the nose, and not by the biblical truth, couched in Wesleyan language—a Church whose membership would be settled by a “desire to flee the wrath to come.” We will address ourselves to one phase of this problem—that which concerns the Negro particularly.

In the first place, to this moment in our history, no prejudicial or discriminatory act against us has been passed or put into our Book of Discipline. To the contrary, we share and share alike in all the benefits of the Church with absolute

equality with our white members. In the next place, the Church aided us by her generous and liberal gifts to accumulate millions in Church and school properties, which could not have been done by our own unaided efforts in the same period of time. As to the matter of the administration of our law by our chief pastors, it is upon record that they are brotherly, kind, patient, and highly considerate of all the interests of the work among us. It has been our privilege to see certain of our bishops agonize in effort and prayer that they might make the appointments for the good of all in certain colored Conferences; more than that, the writer has seen certain of our bishops broken with anxiety and sympathy for the hard lot that came upon some of the preachers. Such bishops were brothers beloved in all the Conferences.

With all the facts in hand, the Negro race knows that the heart of the Church is not alienated in the least from him, and he has discovered that heart to be

as true as the needle is to the pole, nor is he convinced that the Church is in the game of deluding him by a falsetto voice and of ensnaring him into the quagmire of a spurious equality, and thus cover him with defeat and humiliation. And until she speaks to the contrary, or until some such condition described above that happened in our Church and in other religious bodies obtains, we will bung up our ears with wax, as did the jack tars of the unconquerable Ulysses, against the bewitching notes of the destructive siren, and then with the monk of Eisleben, lift our voice and say, "Here we stand; we can do no other, God help us. Amen."

Further, the Methodist Episcopal Church is the only great Protestant Church in America where the two races meet on a large scale of equality in brotherly and legislative gatherings. There are colored people in nearly all of the other Protestant denominations, but in no one of them do they count for more than a figurehead in the moral, social,

and religious life of these denominations. In the Methodist Episcopal Church they are a vital and component part, and the race prefers to have this relation continued, and they will be the last to lift the cry of disunion or separation.

We do not intend to run; running solves nothing. Our various colored Methodisms ran, and they have only postponed the solution of the problem and made it the more complex by their act. We have a heritage in the Church. We helped to make her great, and we have a right and title to her glory and power, and we do not intend to surrender that right, nor can it be taken from us, for "the gifts of the gods are never taken back." We are contending for a principle, namely, the Brotherhood of Man; not "a brotherhood" in the abstract, nor that which is sometimes found in a rhetorical oration of an enthusiast, but a brotherhood which is grounded in the concrete and in the actualities of our common life and also in the duties, privileges, and prerogatives of membership



in the Church of Christ as well as in the civic and political prerogatives of equality before the law of the land. This condition has not come yet, but we will wait and we will not grind our teeth nor curse God nor abuse man while waiting. The tractability and the proverbial patience and docility of our nature and our well-known waiting on the Lord for freedom to come through the weary centuries serve us in good stead in all emergencies. We believe, moreover, that this principle, when put into practice in the Church, will discover itself also in all the relations of civic life. We will contend for it upon the basis of the Golden Rule and the Sermon on the Mount. We ask for nothing more and would not be regarded as worthy were we to be content with anything less. If, however, our great Church, whose crown is illuminated with gems of heroic deeds, a few of which were placed there by some of her sunburned children, closes her ear to our plea, we shall say to her that our faith in the righteousness of the plea is

not shaken, and we believe that the God who wrought so mightily for us in the past will yet help us to win what we are struggling for, that we may cast off "the reproach of Egypt" and be fully equipped for advanced service with the rest of his children.

Should we fail, we shall take up our task and trudge along, as we have done in former years, in the same old rugged way, with an unnecessary handicap; ridiculed on the one hand by the exclusive Negro Methodisms as moral cowards, and stung by the merciless criticisms on the other hand from whites, North and South, as sycophants, both of whom desire to see a disruption in our Church for selfish ends.

To all such we say, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." Despite failure on one hand and sneers and contumely on the other, knowing that we are right in our contention and in the right place, and know-

ing that every battle our race has won was fought, not upon our heels but upon our knees, and believing intensely that God speaks to us in our day of struggle and alternating hope and defeat, as he spoke to Jacob years ago, when he said, "I will bless him that blesseth you and curse him that curseth you," we are undaunted in our persistence and inflexible in our purpose to stay in our Father's house.

We are opposed to separation and plead for the continued unity and solidarity of our Church in her complex forces, that she may continue to represent in her physiognomy and world-wide activities the race of mankind as a biblical Church. We want a Church for Jews and Gentiles, for white and black, for rich and poor; a Church for man, a Church that is not built upon race affinity but upon Christ affinity; not upon Abrahamic blood, but upon Abrahamic faith; we want a Church for the people of God.

Finally, with confidence that we know whereof we speak, from a wide circle of

knowledge, gained in travel and by contact with all classes of colored people in every part of the Church, we are bold to affirm that the colored membership of our Church are opposed to separation, or the so-called "segregation," and to the ancient nondescript "*ecclesiæ in ecclesia*," now called by the high-sounding term "autonomy."

We plead for colored bishops to supplement the work of white bishops in the colored Conferences; for white bishops to coöperate with colored bishops and thus preserve the peace of our ranks, prevent the constant decimation of our membership, strengthen the faith of our people, enlarge our work, bring our schools to great efficiency, hearten this struggling race, and bring in the glad day when the American Negro shall constitute the mighty arm of God, through the Methodist Episcopal Church, to help Ethiopia stretch her withered hand to God. This plea we believe to be just; it is Christlike in its motives and possibilities. We leave it with a race whose

glory is that it believes in brotherhood, in justice, and in an equality of opportunity for all men.

### THE SOCIAL EQUALITY BOGIE


One of the most dangerous and at the same time pernicious and persistent legacies handed down to our Christian democracy is the idea of caste prejudice. This malignant spirit was breathed into Christianity by the effete and to this day paralyzed East. In that inert section mankind was divided into antagonistic classes separated by impassable gulfs. The evil spirit next drew its repulsive form into the Hebrew religion of Amos, Isaiah, and Daniel, and corrupted it into the unspiritual religion of the Pharisees and scribes. The Great Teacher, in parable after parable, sought to break through the hypocrisy of these blind teachers by laying down certain ground principles by which to judge men. These principles were taken up and restated by his greatest apostle in his epistles to the Romans and Galatians.

In our day caste prejudice and social equality are appealed to when questions of right and fair play are under discussion. It becomes necessary to state one's position at times upon even the most delicate subjects. This is the one subject about which there has been so much immaturity of thought and words that have darkened counsel to no other purpose than to defeat the right and bring humiliation to the weak. Facts will support the contention that the Negro has suffered more at the point of this poisoned sword than from all other weapons used by his enemies and so-called friends. He has been ignorantly misrepresented by the unsound and stupid pratings of beclouded minds and by the specious and ingenious arguments of shrewd and wily babblers. The guilty parties may be found in all climes and times, and in all sections and callings. The Negro has nothing to fear by an appeal to the Bible, philosophy, fact, common sense, and to a clear statement of truth.

The question of social equality is ir-

relevant when fundamental questions are under passage way. The justification of the author for the frank discussion herein lies in the fact that in some mysterious way this monster has shown his hydra head and shakes it in threatening pose to his devotees, lest they forsake his altars and worship at the altar of truth, justice, and right.

The South formerly raised the banner before the country which read on one side, "Beware of Negro domination," and on the other side, "Beware of Negro social equality." They did not fear either catastrophe, but it was a good way to inflame prejudice against this rising man, to keep their own ranks together, and to defeat the true spirit of democracy and deny justice to the black man. This false cry did its deadly work. But prejudice is brainless, and cannot be reasoned with; it is conscienceless, and cannot be appealed to; it is heartless, and cannot be controverted. It is based upon ignorance, selfishness, and fear. It must be lived down or outlived.



As to the question of social equality, the self-respecting Negro will never deny that he is, in spirit and essential divine and human endowments for the largest possible growth, the equal of any other creature into whose nostrils the breath of divine life has been blown. He is aware that he has not yet the money, the learning, the standing or the opportunity possessed by his more favored brother, but in spirit, in possibility of culture, in essential manhood, in longings for the divine life, in appreciation of all that is just and true and honorable; in faith in God, and with a faith unshaken by these troublous times, in his own destiny (because God has said good things concerning him) he firmly believes that he is a component part of the rank of mankind; not better, not worse, but as good as the best and deserving the best; not superior nor inferior, but equal, in undeveloped powers it may be, nevertheless, and that he is not a social pariah or a moral leper to be shunned or denied any good thing that belongs in right to man.



He is not asking for privileges, but he is contending for rights—the rights of sober, law-abiding, cultivated, capable Christian manhood. We dare not claim to be superiors; races are not superior; the superior history and achievements among races are the fruits of superior men in races. Man alone makes himself superior. But we do claim equality upon the sound foundation of the Bible, reason, common sense, and the practical experience of mankind. We are the equal—social, if you please—in the true sense, of our equals, and man is our equal.

Observe, this equality does not establish the rights or privileges of marriage; marriage is a question of social whim, social privilege, and social prerogative across which gulf none can pass save he to whom the mystic word is given. There is, therefore, such a thing as social equality without social privilege.

The “rights” of a bishop do not of themselves entitle him to social privileges. These are individually conferred or extended and may be individually with-

drawn or refused without once impinging upon "rights" or doing him an injustice. Rights inhere in the office and are determined by legislative enactments based upon constitutional limitations.

There may be among those possessing equality of rights no equality of privilege. Social privileges are not the corollaries to equality of rights. A law-abiding citizen who fulfills the requirements of citizenship imposed upon him by legislative decree is not thereby entitled to the privileges of another citizen's home or table. Hence it is sound in ethics and philosophy to hold that equality of brain, if such may be found, and civic or political or ecclesiastical membership does not carry with it the right to social equality, to say nothing of social courtesies. The individual must believe himself socially equal and then proceed to make his own circles. He must not degrade himself by self-abasement in a shameful acknowledgment of inequality because of a refusal of the other party to accord to him social courtesies. In the final analysis, as a

man is in his spirit so is he, and he must remember that a failure to sit at another's table does not brand him as an inferior; he may be superior, as many of the Negroes well know and can prove, but it is a failure that is void of moral significance, other things being equal. A man has a right to say who may sit at his table without doing violence to any principle or man.

The Negro is not disturbed about the question of social equality. Do you ask whether we believe in social equality? We answer emphatically, Yes and No. We believe in the equality of kind. There are Negroes whose pure life and high ideals, whose intelligence and lofty spirit, whose home training and broad conceptions of life, and whose devotion to everything that is of good report, will permit them to keep company only with those of their kind, be they white or black, brown or yellow, or of whatever other hue. To us color or country or age means nothing; the man within is everything.

In all the appeals made by the Negro

for a race-bishop the petitioners have reasoned, pleaded, and argued to convince the Church that they were not pleading for social courtesies or the "right" for such a bishop, should one be elected, to be entertained in white homes. They have said and do say in clear, cogent, and unmistakable language that they want a bishop of their race for service and that among themselves only. We are clear in our thought that the power of the episcopacy does not carry the right to ask or demand social privileges. We are contending for the weightier matters of the law, namely, Negro bishops to serve a needy and worthy people and not to be served with the social courtesies that belong to the individual to dispense as he wills. We care not for tithing the mint, the rue, and the cummin in the parlors and reception halls of any people, or for sitting beside white people in parlor cars and drawing rooms. We ask not for these, beautiful, excellent, exhilarating, and refreshing as they are. We ask for Negro bishops to do the work of bishops

among this people just as white bishops do the work among the white race. Call him by any official title you choose, place him to live where you will, only give us such officers of our own blood, in whom we have confidence, that they may make "full proof of their ministry" and be our leaders in the mighty struggle to capture the whole race for Christ.

The cry of "color line" is raised only when it is a question of advancing the Negro to places of high service. The race have never objected to white men serving in their churches and schools. We do not make the demand that these schools and churches be turned over bodily to the race. We plead for participation, not domination, and for coöperation and not exclusion.

*Is our Church equal to this great task?*





